

Message Text

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DEPT PASS AGRICULTURE

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SUBJ: AGRICULTURAL OBSERVATIONS IN NORTH CAUCASUS

AND UKRAINE AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 1, 1973

1. ASSISTANT AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE HUGH AND GEORGE WANAMAKER, FAS, TRAVELLED BY CAR MOSCOW-OREL-KHARKOV-ROSTOV-KRASNODAR-KHARKOV-KIEV-ODESSA AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 1. R. GROUNDWATER, CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL OFFICER, JOINED TRAVELERS IN KRASNODAR.

2. MOSCOW-OREL-KHARKOV, AUGUST 23-24: HARVEST PROGRESS AND FALL FIELD WORK MUCH LESS ADVANCED THIS PORTION TRIP THAN REMAINDER. RAIN AUGUST 23, CLEAR AUGUST 24; SOIL MOISTURE ADEQUATE EVERYWHERE BUT FIELDS NOT TOO WET FOR FIELD WORK. FIELDS ALREADY HARVESTED GENERALLY VERY GREEN AND WEEDY. MOST FIELDS OF STANDING GRAIN MODERATELY TO BADLY LODGED INDICATING MUCH PREVIOUS RAIN. SEVERAL FIELDS OF BADLY LODGED GRAIN CHECKED BETWEEN OREL-KHARKOV; THEY WERE DAMP UNDERNEATH, MATTED ALMOST FLAT WITH SOME SHATTERING. SEVERAL FIELDS OF WINDROWED WHEAT NEAR KURSK CHECKED; TERRAIN WAS DRYER ONLY SLIGHTLY DAMP UNDERNEATH, NO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SIGNS WHATEVER OF MOLD, BLACKENING, OR ROTTING OBSERVED.

HARVESTING OF ROW CROPS HAD NOT STARTED.

3. OF COUNT FIELDS ON THIS LEG ABOUT ONE-FIFTH WERE ROW CROPS, ONE-FIFTH PLOWED, ONE-FOURTH STANDING GRAIN AND THE REMAINDER IN STUBBLE. FIRST AND PRACTICALLY ONLY FIELD OF EMERGED WINTER GRAIN OBSERVED JUST NORTH OF KURSK; ABOUT THREE INCHES TALL.

4. KHARKOV-ROSTOV-KRASNODAR-KHARKOV-KIEV-ODESSA, AUGUST 25-SEPTEMBER 1: WEATHER ENTIRE TIME CLEAR, USUALLY SUNNY, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FEW SHOWERS BETWEEN KHARKOV AND KIEV, AND MODERATELY WARM. SOIL MOISTURE EVERYWHERE ADEQUATE BUT NOWHERE EXCESSIVE. CONDITIONS JUDGED IDEAL FOR FIELD WORK AND SOWING OF WINTER GRAIN. EMBASSY OFFICER KAMMAN WHO DROVE CAR BACK FROM ODESSA TO MOSCOW INDICATED ABOVE WEATHER CONDITIONS OBTAINED WITH ONLY FEW SCATTERED SHOWERS THROUGH SEPTEMBER 3 WHEN ARRIVED IN OREL. SEPTEMBER 4 BETWEEN OREL AND MOSCOW MUCH RAIN. KAMMAN'S OBSERVATIONS ON FIELD WORK SITUATION KIEV-OREL ROAD SEPTEMBER 3 GENERALLY AGREE WITH ASSISTANT AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE OBSERVATIONS.

5. HARVEST OF SMALL GRAIN THIS ENTIRE PORTION PRACTICALLY FINISHED. LESS THAN THREE-TENTHS OF ONE PERCENT OF THE COUNT FIELDS HAD STANDING SMALL GRIN AND OVER ONE-HALF OF THESE OBSERVED FIRST DAY THIS PORTION BETWEEN KHARKOV AND ROSTOV. WHAT LITTLE STANDING GRAIN OBSERVED WAS MOSTLY MILLET WITH FEW BUCKWHEAT FIELDS. GRAIN IN WIND-ROWS WAS ONLY VERY INFREQUENTLY ENCOUNTERED. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, STRAW IN STUBBLE FIELDS WAS ALREADY GATHERED INTO LARGE STACKS SO FIELDS READY FOR PLOWING. AS NO SMALL GRAIN IN FIELSA QUALITY COULD NOT BE JUDGED BUT STUBBLE FIELDS OFTEN EXHIBITED LARGE AMOUNTS OF VOLUNTEER TRAIN; IN MANY CASES SO HEAVY THAT FORMER WINDROWS AND FIELD EDGES LOOKED "SOWN" FROM ROAD. GENERAL "GREEN-NESS" AND GOOD CONDITION OF PASTRES AND ALFALFA FIELDS INDICATIVE OF MUCH PREVIOUS RAIN. COUNT SHEETS SHOWED ONLY TWO-TENTHS OF ONE PERCENT OF FIELDS CONTAINING EMERGED WINTER GRAIN AND SUCH FIELDS WERE VERY INFREQUENT.

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6. HARVESTING OF SUGARBEETS HAD NOT YET STARTED, BUT A GOOD NUMBER OF FIELDS HAD BEEN TOPPED. THOSE BETWEEN ROSTOV AND KRASNODAR WERE VERY, VERY WEEDY AND AT LEAST IN ONE FIELD THE LEAVES HAD BEEN PRACTICALLY EATEN UP BY INSECTS. BY CONTRAST, BETWEEN KHARKOV-KIEV-ODESSA WHERE HEAVIEST CONCENTRATION OF SUGARBEET FIELDS OBSERVED, FIELDS WERE CLEAN, SUNFLOWER FIELDS WERE ESPECIALLY HEAVILY CONCENTRATED BETWEEN KHARKOV AND ROSTOV. AS

WOULD BE EXPECTED, PERCENTAGE OF MATURE, READY TO HARVEST
FIELDS INCREASED AS ONE DROVE SOUTH BUT GENERALLY CON-
SIDERABLE VARIABILITY FROM FIELD TO FIELD. HEADS WELL
FILLED AND LITTLE EVIDENCE OF DISEASE PROBLEMS OBSERVED.
HARVESTING JUST GETTING STARTED IN A HANDFUL OF FIELDS
DURING TRIP. CORN HARVESTING, MOSTLY FOR SILAGE, GETTING
UNDERWAY AT START OF TRIP,
WAS IN FULL SWING SOMEWHERE
BETWEEN KIEV AND ODESSA ON AUGUST 30.

7. OBSERVERS WERE DULY IMPRESSED BY AMOUNT OF FALL FIELD
WORK WHICH HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, ESPECIALLY BETWEEN KIEV
AND ODESSA. A GOOD NUMBER OF FIELDS APPEARED TO HAVE
BEEN SOWN AND A NUMBER OF DRILLS WERE WORKING. IN
GENERAL, IT LOOKED AS THOUGH PERIOD OF MASSIVE SOWING
OF WINTER GRAIN WAS JUST ABOUT TO START. COUNT SHEET
FIELDS FOR THIS PORTION OF THE TRIP BROKEN DOWN: ROW
CROPS, A LITTLE OVER THIRTY-FIVE PERCENT; STUBBLE
ONE-FOURTH; STANDING GRAIN, INSIGNIFICANT AND PLOWED,
SOMEWHAT LESS THAN FOUR-TENTHS.

8. SUMMARY COMMENT: CONDITIONS OF OBSERVED AREAS OF
UKRAINE AND NORTH CAUCASUS SEEMED IDEAL FOR FALL PLOWING
AND SOWING OF WINTER GRAIN. HOWEVER, PRICE FOR CURRENTLY
FAVORABLE SITUATION IN THIS REGARD MAY HAVE BEEN PAID IN
UNUSUALLY HIGH HARVESTING LOSSES AND/OR LOW QUALITY OF
GRAINS ALREADY HARVESTED. UNHARVESTED SMALL GRAIN FIELDS
OBSERVED MOSCOW-KHARKOV WERE GENERALLY IN POOR SHAPE WITH
MUCOILODGING AND WEEDS. FINALLY, EVEN IF FAVORABLE
CONDITIONS OBSERVED MAY HAVE OBTAINED GENERALLY THROUGHOUT
UKRAINE AND NORTH CUUCASUS SOVIET PRESS AND RADIO COM-
MENTARY INDICATE SITUATION IN OTHER AREAS, PARTICULARLY
IN IMPORTANT ADJACENT GRAIN AREAS TO THE EAST SUCH AS
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THE VOLGA REGION, WERE PROBABLY MUCH LESS FAVORABLE
DURING THIS PERIOD.
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